

## **Appendix 4**

### **Halton Borough Council Selective Licensing Consultation**

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

##### **1. Introduction**

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the potential equality implications of Halton Borough Council's proposed Selective Licensing scheme.

It has been prepared to support the Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This assessment considers the likely impact of the proposed Selective Licensing scheme on people with protected characteristics. It also identifies potential risks and mitigation measures to help ensure that the scheme is fair, accessible, proportionate and inclusive.

The assessment should be read alongside the Selective Licensing Consultation Document and the wider evidence base supporting the proposed designation.

##### **2. Proposal being assessed**

Halton Borough Council is consulting on a proposal to introduce a Selective Licensing scheme under Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004.

The proposed designation areas are:

- Central and West Bank ward;
- Appleton ward;
- Mersey and Weston ward;
- Bridgewater ward; and
- LSOA E01012379 in Highfield.

If introduced, the scheme would apply to most privately rented homes within the proposed designation areas that are let or occupied under a tenancy or licence, unless exempt by law. This would include properties occupied by a single household, properties occupied by two unrelated sharers, and smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation that are not required to be licensed under the mandatory HMO licensing regime.

Properties already required to be licensed as HMOs under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 would not fall within the Selective Licensing scheme.

The proposed scheme would cover an estimated 3,485 private rented households. Based on 2021 Census data, this represents around 43.4% of the borough's private rented households.

The Council is consulting on the proposed scheme on the grounds of poor housing conditions and high levels of deprivation. The purpose of the scheme would be to improve property standards, strengthen landlord management, protect tenants and support better housing and neighbourhood outcomes in the areas where the evidence shows the greatest need.

Landlords and managing agents of licensable properties would be required to apply for a licence, demonstrate that they are fit and proper persons, and comply with licence conditions throughout the licence period.

The proposed licence conditions cover matters including:

- gas safety;
- electrical safety;
- smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms;
- furniture safety;
- written tenancy or licence agreements;
- repairs and maintenance;
- property standards;
- overcrowding;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation that fall within the Selective Licensing scheme;
- security;
- external areas and waste management;
- tenancy deposit protection;
- nuisance and anti-social behaviour linked to the property;
- co-operation with the Council and Cheshire Police where relevant;
- provision of information to tenants; and
- keeping the Council informed of changes in ownership, management or contact details.

The proposed licence fee is £685 per property for the full licence period, usually up to five years. This is equivalent to approximately £137 per year, £11.41 per month or £2.63 per week. The fee would be split into Part A and Part B, with Part A payable at application stage and Part B payable once the Council has assessed the application and decided to grant the licence. The fee has been calculated on a cost-recovery basis.

The Council is also offering a discount of £100 to accredited members of the NRLA

### **3. Who is likely to be affected?**

The groups most likely to be affected by the proposed scheme are:

- private rented sector tenants living in the proposed designation areas;
- landlords and managing agents operating in the proposed designation areas;
- residents and businesses in the proposed designation areas and surrounding neighbourhoods;
- vulnerable households living in poor-quality, insecure or unaffordable private rented housing;
- households on low incomes;
- households affected by fuel poverty, overcrowding, damp, mould, excess cold or disrepair;
- people who may be less likely to complain about poor housing conditions because of fear of eviction, concern about rent increases, lack of awareness of their rights, language barriers, disability, digital exclusion or other vulnerabilities;
- Council services and partner organisations working across housing, public health, community safety, homelessness prevention, environmental health and neighbourhood services.

The proposal is expected to have the greatest direct impact on private rented sector tenants, landlords and managing agents in the proposed designation areas. It may also have wider indirect benefits for communities by improving property management, reducing poor housing conditions and supporting safer, warmer and better-maintained neighbourhoods.

#### **4. Evidence considered**

The Council has considered a range of evidence in developing the proposed Selective Licensing scheme.

The evidence shows that Halton's private rented sector is relatively modest at borough level, accounting for around 14.3% of households. However, it is much more concentrated in specific wards. The highest concentrations of private rented households are in:

- Mersey and Weston – around 27.7%;
- Appleton – around 26.1%;
- Bridgewater – around 23.1%; and
- Central and West Bank – around 21.6%.

These four wards have private rented sector levels above the national benchmark used in the Council's assessment. The Council has also reviewed smaller geographies and identified LSOA E01012379 in Highfield as having a private rented sector rate of around 23.0%, alongside evidence of stock condition and deprivation concern.

The evidence base identifies the following key issues:

- the private rented sector is concentrated in specific parts of Halton rather than evenly distributed across the borough;
- the proposed designation areas contain high proportions of private rented housing;
- Halton's private rented sector contains a large proportion of terraced housing, flats and semi-detached homes;

- around two-thirds of Halton's private rented sector was built before 1976;
- older homes are more likely to require ongoing repair, maintenance and investment;
- older terraced homes, flats and converted accommodation may be more likely to experience damp and mould, excess cold, poor ventilation, poor insulation, low energy efficiency, structural deterioration and fire safety concerns;
- energy efficiency is a particular concern where weaker EPC performance overlaps with higher levels of private renting;
- lower quartile rents in Halton increased by around 60% between 2020 and 2025, increasing affordability pressure for lower-income households;
- between 2020 and 2026, 652 housing condition complaints were recorded across Halton;
- the four proposed full wards accounted for 257 housing condition complaints, representing around 39% of all complaints in the borough;
- Central and West Bank and Mersey and Weston recorded the highest and second highest number of complaints in the borough;
- BRE stock condition modelling estimates that 1,454 private rented homes in Halton have Category 1 HHSRS hazards, equivalent to 16% of the sector;
- in the proposed full wards, BRE modelling estimates that Category 1 hazards affect 22% of private rented homes in Mersey and Weston, 20% in Appleton, 19% in Bridgewater and 14% in Central and West Bank;
- the proposed wards sit within the more deprived half of Halton's ward ranking, with Central and West Bank ranking 1st out of 18 wards for deprivation concern, Appleton 5th, Mersey and Weston 7th and Bridgewater 8th;
- LSOA E01012379 in Highfield has a high private rented sector concentration and shows evidence of both stock condition concern and wider deprivation;
- formal enforcement activity has been relatively limited compared with the wider evidence of likely poor housing conditions, suggesting a gap between the scale of need and the cases reaching formal enforcement.

The Council has also considered alternatives to licensing, including continued use of existing enforcement powers, civil penalties, prosecution, voluntary accreditation and improvement grants. These tools remain important but are considered insufficient on their own because they are largely reactive and do not provide a proactive, area-based framework for improving standards in the proposed designation areas.

## **5. Overall equality assessment**

The proposed Selective Licensing scheme is expected to have a broadly positive equality impact.

Poor housing conditions are not experienced equally. People on low incomes, disabled people, older people, families with children, pregnant women, people with long-term health conditions, some ethnic minority households, migrant households, people living in overcrowded housing and people with limited housing choices may be more likely to live in

poor-quality private rented accommodation or may be less able to challenge poor conditions.

Poor housing can also intensify existing disadvantage. Damp, mould, excess cold, unsafe electrics, disrepair, overcrowding and poor property management can affect health, wellbeing, family life, financial resilience and quality of life. These impacts may be more serious for residents who are already experiencing poverty, poor health, disability, fuel poverty or housing insecurity.

By improving property standards and landlord management in high-risk areas, the proposed scheme has the potential to advance equality of opportunity and reduce disadvantage for households who are more exposed to poor housing conditions, fuel poverty and insecure housing.

However, potential risks need to be recognised and managed. These include the possibility that some landlords may seek to pass licence costs on to tenants, withdraw from the market, reduce the supply of lower-cost private rented homes, or respond negatively to tenants who raise concerns. There is also a risk that some tenants may not engage with the consultation or the scheme because of fear, language barriers, disability, digital exclusion or lack of confidence.

The Council should mitigate these risks through clear communication, accessible consultation, tenant advice, landlord engagement, monitoring, proportionate enforcement, partnership working and close review of rent, eviction and homelessness trends.

## **6. Assessment by protected characteristic**

### **Age**

Likely impact: Positive overall, with some potential risks to monitor.

Older people, children and young people can be particularly affected by poor housing conditions. Excess cold, damp and mould, poor insulation, unsafe stairs, fall hazards, inadequate heating and poor property maintenance can have a significant impact on older residents, infants and children. Overcrowding can also affect children's health, wellbeing, privacy, sleep and educational outcomes.

The proposed scheme is likely to benefit older people and families with children by improving standards in privately rented homes, requiring landlords to maintain properties, and helping the Council identify hazards earlier. The BRE stock condition evidence identifies fall hazards as a particular issue in the proposed wards, which is relevant to older people and people with mobility issues.

Potential risks include any increase in rents if landlords seek to recover licensing costs from tenants. This could affect younger households, families with children and older people on fixed or low incomes.

Mitigation:

- Monitor rent levels, affordability and homelessness presentations in the proposed designation areas.
- Ensure tenants are aware of their rights and how to report poor housing conditions safely.
- Provide accessible information for older residents, families and young renters.
- Work with advice agencies, children's services, adult social care, health partners and homelessness prevention services where tenants may be at risk.
- Consider age-related vulnerability when prioritising inspection and enforcement activity.
- Ensure consultation opportunities are accessible to people of different ages, including people who are digitally excluded.

## **Disability**

Likely impact: Positive overall.

Disabled people and people with long-term health conditions may be particularly affected by poor housing conditions, including cold homes, damp and mould, disrepair, poor access, unsafe internal or external areas, inadequate heating and poor ventilation.

The proposed scheme should help improve conditions for disabled tenants by requiring landlords to respond to disrepair, maintain properties safely and co-operate with the Council. Better inspection, compliance and enforcement activity should help identify hazards that may disproportionately affect disabled residents, including excess cold, damp, mould, falls hazards and unsafe access.

There is a potential risk that disabled tenants may find it harder to participate in the consultation or access licensing information if communications are not provided in accessible formats. Some disabled residents may also be less able to report poor conditions or may be more dependent on their current accommodation, making them more vulnerable to poor landlord practice or rent increases.

Mitigation:

- Provide consultation and scheme information in accessible formats, including large print, Easy Read, audio or other formats where requested.
- Ensure online materials are accessible.
- Offer telephone and paper-based options for those unable to engage digitally.
- Work with disability organisations, advice services, adult social care, health partners and voluntary sector organisations to promote awareness.
- Consider disability-related needs when prioritising inspections and responding to complaints.
- Ensure staff involved in the scheme understand the potential housing impacts of disability and long-term health conditions.
- Signpost tenants to advice and support where poor housing conditions are affecting health, independence or safety.

## **Gender reassignment**

Likely impact: Neutral to positive.

There is no evidence that the proposal would have a direct negative impact on people proposing to undergo, undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment.

However, trans and non-binary residents may experience housing insecurity, discrimination, harassment or vulnerability in the private rented sector. A better regulated and more professionally managed private rented sector may provide indirect benefits by improving standards of landlord conduct, strengthening tenant protection and providing clearer routes for advice and enforcement.

Mitigation:

- Ensure tenant communications are inclusive and respectful.
- Ensure staff and contractors involved in consultation, licensing and enforcement follow equality, dignity and anti-discrimination standards.
- Monitor consultation feedback for any specific barriers or risks identified by trans and non-binary residents.
- Ensure complaints about harassment, intimidation or discriminatory treatment are taken seriously and referred appropriately.

## **Marriage and civil partnership**

Likely impact: Neutral.

The proposal is not expected to have a specific positive or negative impact on people because they are married or in a civil partnership.

Households of different types, including couples, families and civil partners, may benefit from improved housing conditions and better property management where they live in privately rented homes within the proposed designation areas.

Mitigation:

- No specific mitigation is required beyond ensuring fair access to information, advice and support for all household types.

## **Pregnancy and maternity**

Likely impact: Positive overall.

Pregnant women, babies and new parents can be particularly affected by poor housing conditions, including damp, mould, excess cold, overcrowding, poor ventilation and disrepair. Poor housing can contribute to stress, respiratory problems, poor health and wider risks to family wellbeing.

The proposed scheme is likely to benefit pregnant women and households with babies or young children by improving property standards and enabling earlier intervention where homes are unsafe, cold or poorly maintained.

Potential risks include affordability pressures if licence costs are passed on through rent increases, or if landlords decide to leave the market and reduce available housing options.

Mitigation:

- Provide clear routes for pregnant women and families with young children to report poor housing conditions.
- Work with health visitors, midwives, family support services, children's services and advice agencies to identify housing-related risks.
- Prioritise serious hazards affecting babies, young children or pregnant women where appropriate.
- Monitor affordability and homelessness risks for families in the proposed designation areas.
- Ensure consultation information reaches families with young children, including through community, health and family support routes.

## **Race**

Likely impact: Positive overall, with accessibility risks to mitigate.

Some ethnic minority households, migrant households and households whose first language is not English may be more likely to experience barriers in the private rented sector. These barriers may include language barriers, limited awareness of rights, discrimination, insecure employment, low income, fear of challenging landlords, uncertainty about legal rights, or limited access to alternative housing.

The proposed scheme is likely to benefit affected households by improving oversight of the private rented sector, raising property standards and reducing reliance on tenants having to complain before action is taken.

However, there is a risk that consultation and scheme information may not reach all communities if it is only provided in English or through digital channels. There is also a risk that some tenants may be reluctant to engage with the Council if they are concerned about landlord retaliation, rent increases, immigration status or loss of accommodation.

Mitigation:

- Provide translated information where there is identified need.
- Use plain English in consultation and tenant-facing material.
- Work with community organisations, advice agencies, faith groups and voluntary sector partners to promote awareness.
- Make clear that the purpose of licensing is to improve housing standards and protect tenants.
- Ensure that enforcement activity does not discourage tenants from reporting unsafe conditions.
- Monitor consultation responses by ethnicity where possible and appropriate.
- Provide non-digital routes for people who may not access online information.

- Ensure staff and contractors understand equality, diversity and anti-discrimination requirements.

### **Religion or belief**

Likely impact: Neutral to positive.

The proposal is not expected to have a direct negative impact on people because of religion or belief.

Some faith communities may be concentrated in particular neighbourhoods or may rely on private rented accommodation. Where households experience poor housing, overcrowding or affordability pressures, they may benefit from improved standards and stronger landlord accountability.

Mitigation:

- Engage with faith and community organisations during consultation where appropriate.
- Ensure consultation events and engagement activities are accessible and sensitive to religious observance where possible.
- Provide information through a range of channels, not solely online.
- Monitor consultation feedback for any specific issues linked to religion or belief.

### **Sex**

Likely impact: Positive overall, with some risks to monitor.

Women and men may experience the private rented sector differently. Women, including lone parents and survivors of domestic abuse, may be more exposed to housing insecurity, affordability pressures and poor housing options. Women with children may have limited ability to move away from poor-quality accommodation due to school, childcare and support networks.

The proposed scheme may benefit women, particularly lone parents and women with caring responsibilities, by improving housing standards and strengthening the Council's ability to intervene where landlords fail to maintain safe homes.

Men may also benefit, particularly single men living in lower-cost private rented accommodation, shared housing or poor-quality homes. Where poor housing overlaps with homelessness risk, mental health issues, substance misuse or rough sleeping pathways, improved private rented sector standards may support better tenancy sustainment and health outcomes.

Potential risks include rent increases, landlord withdrawal or reduced access to lower-cost private rented homes. These risks could affect households with limited financial resilience, including single-person households, lone parents and people at risk of homelessness.

Mitigation:

- Monitor homelessness, eviction and affordability impacts by household type where possible.  
Work with domestic abuse, homelessness, family support and advice services to identify risks.
- Ensure tenant information reaches both single-person households and families.
- Ensure enforcement activity is sensitive to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure tenants know where to seek advice if they face harassment, threatened eviction, unsafe conditions or retaliatory behaviour.

### **Sexual orientation**

Likely impact: Neutral to positive.

There is no evidence that the proposal would have a direct negative impact on lesbian, gay or bisexual residents.

Some LGBT+ residents may experience discrimination, family rejection, homelessness risk or insecurity in the private rented sector. A better regulated sector may indirectly support LGBT+ tenants by improving professional standards, improving accountability and providing clearer routes for advice and enforcement.

Mitigation:

- Ensure communications are inclusive.
- Monitor consultation responses for any issues raised by LGBT+ residents or organisations.
- Ensure staff involved in the scheme follow equality, dignity and anti-discrimination standards.
- Ensure advice and enforcement routes are accessible to tenants who may be experiencing harassment, discrimination or housing insecurity.

### **Socio-economic disadvantage**

Although socio-economic disadvantage is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, it is highly relevant to the proposed scheme because the evidence shows that poor housing conditions, deprivation, low income, fuel poverty and private renting overlap in the proposed designation areas.

The proposed wards sit within the more deprived half of Halton's ward ranking. Central and West Bank ranks first out of 18 wards for overall deprivation concern, Appleton ranks fifth, Mersey and Weston ranks seventh and Bridgewater ranks eighth. The proposed Highfield LSOA also shows evidence of stock condition concern and wider deprivation.

The evidence also shows that low-income households are prominent within the private rented sector in the proposed wards, ranging from 44% in Appleton to 52% in Central and West Bank. Lower quartile rents in Halton increased by around 60% between 2020 and 2025, creating additional pressure for households on low incomes and those reliant on Local Housing Allowance or Universal Credit.

The proposed scheme is likely to have a positive impact on low-income households by improving property conditions, strengthening landlord accountability and helping the Council move from a mainly reactive model to a more proactive approach.

However, affordability risks must be monitored carefully. The licence fee is payable by landlords, but there is a potential risk that some landlords may seek to pass costs on to tenants through rent increases. There is also a risk that some landlords may leave the market or reduce the supply of lower-cost private rented homes.

Mitigation:

- Monitor rent levels and affordability in the proposed designation areas.
- Monitor homelessness approaches and eviction trends.
- Provide clear information to landlords on the fee structure, compliance expectations and support available.
- Ensure tenants know where to seek advice if they face rent increases, harassment, retaliatory behaviour or threatened eviction.
- Consider whether landlord good practice discounts can support compliance without undermining scheme funding.
- Continue to use homelessness prevention, advice and enforcement powers alongside licensing.
- Work with local advice agencies and voluntary sector partners to support tenants who may be financially vulnerable.

### **Consultation accessibility**

The consultation should be designed to reach tenants, landlords, residents, businesses, community organisations and partner agencies likely to be affected by the proposal.

To support equality and accessibility, the Council should ensure that:

- consultation materials are written in clear and accessible language;
- alternative formats are available on request;
- paper copies are available for people who are digitally excluded;
- telephone support is available for people who cannot complete the survey online;
- translated materials or interpretation support are available where needed;
- engagement includes tenants as well as landlords and managing agents;
- community and voluntary sector partners are used to reach groups who may be less likely to respond;
- consultation events are held at different times and through different formats;
- equality monitoring questions are included where appropriate to assess whether responses are representative;
- people are reassured that consultation responses will be considered fairly and that the purpose of the scheme is to improve housing standards.

Particular attention should be given to reaching tenants who may be less likely to respond, including people in poor housing conditions, people on low incomes, people with limited

English, disabled people, older people, younger renters, families with children and people who may fear landlord retaliation.

### **Potential negative impacts and mitigation**

#### **Potential issue: Landlords may seek to pass licence costs on to tenants.**

Equality relevance: This could affect low-income households, families, disabled people, older people, younger renters and other financially vulnerable groups.

Proposed mitigation: Monitor rents and affordability; provide tenant advice; work with homelessness prevention services; communicate that fees are cost-recovery based; ensure tenants know where to seek support if they face unaffordable rent increases.

#### **Potential issue: Some landlords may withdraw properties from the market.**

Equality relevance: This could reduce housing options for vulnerable or low-income households and people with limited housing choice.

Proposed mitigation: Monitor supply and homelessness trends; engage landlords early; provide clear guidance and support for compliance; keep the impact on the lower-cost private rented sector under review.

#### **Potential issue: Tenants may fear retaliation if they report poor conditions.**

Equality relevance: This could affect vulnerable tenants, migrant households, low-income tenants, disabled tenants, families with children and those with limited housing options.

Proposed mitigation: Publicise tenant rights; work with advice agencies; use intelligence-led inspections; respond robustly to harassment, unlawful eviction or retaliatory behaviour; make reporting routes clear and accessible.

#### **Potential issue: Consultation may not reach all affected groups.**

Equality relevance: This could exclude disabled people, people with limited English, digitally excluded residents, older people, younger renters and vulnerable tenants.

Proposed mitigation: Provide alternative formats, translated information where needed, paper copies, telephone support and community-based engagement; work with local partners to promote the consultation.

#### **Potential issue: Landlords with small portfolios may find compliance more challenging.**

Equality relevance: This could affect smaller landlords, including older landlords or those with limited digital skills.

Proposed mitigation: Provide guidance, clear processes, accessible application routes and signposting to landlord support; discounts or support where consistent with the cost-recovery basis of the scheme.

#### **Potential issue: Scheme benefits may not reach the highest-risk tenants if poor conditions remain hidden.**

Equality relevance: This could affect tenants least able to complain, including disabled people, older people, migrant households, people with limited English, people on low incomes and people fearful of eviction.

Proposed mitigation: Use proactive, risk-based inspection and data-led enforcement; work

with partners to identify concerns; use complaints, enforcement, EPC, stock condition and deprivation data to target activity.

**Potential issue: Scheme costs or compliance requirements may affect landlord behaviour.**

Equality relevance: Changes in rent, tenancy terms or landlord willingness to let may affect households with limited financial resilience.

Proposed mitigation: Monitor landlord behaviour, rent trends and homelessness presentations; provide clear communication on responsible compliance; take enforcement action where landlords act unlawfully.

**Advancing equality of opportunity**

The proposed scheme has the potential to advance equality of opportunity by:

- improving housing conditions for tenants in areas where deprivation and poor housing overlap;
- reducing the health impacts of damp, mould, excess cold, disrepair, fire risks, falls hazards and unsafe homes;
- supporting tenants who may be less able to challenge poor conditions themselves;
- improving access to information about tenant rights and landlord responsibilities;
- creating clearer and more enforceable standards for property management;
- supporting more stable, safer and healthier neighbourhoods;
- improving the Council's intelligence about private rented housing and landlord management;
- enabling earlier intervention where poor housing conditions may affect health, wellbeing or tenancy sustainment.

The scheme should particularly benefit households who have limited housing choice and may be more likely to accept poor-quality accommodation because of affordability pressures, lack of alternatives or fear of losing their home.

**Fostering good relations**

The scheme may support good relations by improving neighbourhood conditions, reducing the impact of poorly maintained or poorly managed properties, supporting responsible landlords and improving confidence in the private rented sector.

Clear communication will be important to avoid the perception that the scheme is anti-landlord. The Council should continue to emphasise that the purpose of licensing is to raise standards, protect tenants and create a level playing field for responsible landlords.

The scheme should also support better relationships between landlords, tenants, the Council and partner agencies by establishing clearer expectations, improving communication and providing routes for resolving problems.

**Monitoring and review**

If the scheme is introduced, the Council should monitor equality impacts throughout the life of the designation.

Monitoring should include, where available:

- number of licence applications received;
- number of licences granted, refused, varied or revoked;
- number and type of inspections undertaken;
- hazards identified and resolved;
- Category 1 and Category 2 hazards identified;
- enforcement action taken;
- complaints by ward, LSOA and issue type;
- tenant and landlord feedback;
- requests for information in alternative formats or languages;
- rent levels and affordability indicators;
- homelessness approaches and eviction-related cases;
- evidence of landlord withdrawal or market displacement;
- impact on the supply of lower-cost private rented homes;
- impacts on vulnerable households;
- consultation and engagement reach by protected characteristic, where collected;
- evidence from advice agencies, community organisations, health partners and homelessness services.

The Equality Impact Assessment should be reviewed after consultation and updated before any final decision is made. It should also be reviewed during implementation if monitoring identifies unexpected negative impacts.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed Selective Licensing scheme is expected to have a positive equality impact overall.

The evidence indicates that the proposed designation areas experience an overlap between higher levels of private renting, poor housing conditions, tenant complaints, older housing stock, fuel poverty, deprivation and vulnerability. These conditions are likely to affect some protected characteristic groups and low-income households more severely.

By requiring landlords to obtain a licence, demonstrate that they are fit and proper persons, and comply with enforceable licence conditions, the scheme would help improve housing standards and provide greater protection for tenants in the proposed designation areas.

No protected characteristic group has been identified as being likely to experience unlawful discrimination as a result of the proposal. However, potential negative impacts relating to affordability, access to consultation, fear of retaliation, landlord behaviour and market impacts should be carefully monitored and mitigated.

Subject to consultation responses and the mitigation measures identified in this assessment, the proposed Selective Licensing scheme is considered compatible with the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and supportive of wider objectives to improve housing quality,

reduce inequality, protect vulnerable residents and support healthier, safer and better-managed neighbourhoods in Halton.